

The Station of the Báb

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

At the time of one's declaration of faith in Bahá'u'lláh, every believer additionally acknowledges recognition of the Báb as the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh. Here one will have the opportunity to become more fully aware of the Báb's profound station, of His great significance to the Bahá'í Faith, and of His considerable importance in religious history.

The prophetic Scriptures of past religions allude to a time at the end of a cycle in human history when two Manifestations of God would appear in near proximity to each other. The Báb, Whose name literally means "the gate" or "the door," is the first of those twin Messengers. His ministry figuratively "opened the door," which prepared the way for the appearance of the second Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh.

At the youthful age of twenty-four, the Báb was recognized as that first promised Messenger of God by eighteen souls, each independently and all prior to His public declaration of Prophethood. After declaring Himself to be God's Promised Messenger, He was scorned, imprisoned, and at the age of thirty, shot to death by a regiment of 750 soldiers. His life and ministry were short, dramatic, and of overwhelming spiritual significance to the peoples of the world. During the brief twenty-year span of His Dispensation some twenty thousand of His followers (called Bábís) were put to death by hateful mobs, government officials and religious leaders. The study you are about to embark upon attempts to convey the most basic truths pertaining to the wondrous and astounding station of the Báb.



Room in the house of the Báb where He first declared His Station to Mullá Husayn

OBJECTIVES: *A look to the horizon...*

Facilitator

Review the following objectives with the participants:

1. An objective of this study is to understand the fundamental verities or basic truths regarding the station of the Báb as a Manifestation of God, as the Herald and Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and as an Inaugurator of the new Universal Cycle.
2. An objective of this study is to acquire a deeper love for our Creator and His Manifestation.

THE STUDY PROCESS: *Attaining the water of life...*

Facilitator

Review the following study process with the participants. Then study the numbered quotations on the following pages, one at a time as described below.

- 1. READING:** *A drink from the cup of guidance...*
Have two participants take turns reading the quotation out loud so that it is read twice.
- 2. CONFIRMING MEANING:** *A spray from the fountain of light...*
 - A. If anyone would like to have better understanding of a word used in the quotation, now is the time to look up its substitute phrase, definition or synonym, which can be found in the boxes below each quotation. Read the substitute phrase, definition or synonym out loud so everyone can hear.
 - B. Read the sentence again that contains the word you looked up, while **substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition or synonym from the box below the quotation.
 - C. If anyone would like a better understanding of another word, repeat the process above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words.
- 3. FINDING VALUE:** *Mining the gems of truth...*
Take turns stating each basic fact or truth you can find in the quotation about the station of the Báb.

QUOTATIONS: *Within the meadows of Thy nearness...*

1. ...the Báb, the inaugurator of the Bábi Dispensation, is fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, that He has been invested with sovereign power and authority, and exercises all the rights and prerogatives of independent Prophethood, is yet another fundamental verity which the Message of Bahá'u'lláh insistently proclaims and which its followers must uncompromisingly uphold.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 123)

authority: the right to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior
Dispensation: religious System that regulates human affairs under divine authority
entitled: qualified to be given a right or title
exercises: carries out and performs
fundamental: basic and essential
inaugurator: one who brings about the beginning
independent: one free from the control and influence of others [type of]; self-reliant
insistently: with persistence and firmness
invested: furnished or endowed by right
Manifestations: great Prophets Who reveal the Words, and exhibit the signs and qualities
power: abilities to produce effects or to ☞

influence things or people
prerogatives: exclusive and special privileges
proclaims: formally and publicly declares
Prophethood: status of revealing divinely inspired revelations of God
rank: hold the position among others
reveal: make known by divine means
self-sufficient: able to be maintained without the aid of others [type of]; independent
sovereign: all-encompassing, all-pervading, and a supreme spiritual [type of]
uncompromisingly: while making no concessions; inflexibly
uphold: agree with and give support to
verity: truth, fact, or reality

2. Behold ... how great and lofty is His [the Báb's] station! His rank excelleth that of all the [former] Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones. A Revelation, of which the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or which, in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed....

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 244)

chosen ones: the followers of a Manifestation during the time of His Dispensation; those who are near to God
comprehension: intellectual or mental grasp
decree: official order or decision
disclosed: made it publicly known
excelleth: is above or superior to; surpasses;
"Regarding their statement that 'our faith and religion is superior to every other', by this is meant such Prophets as have appeared before them." (Bahá'u'lláh, TOU, p. 45, ¶2.45)

informed: given the information
inscrutable: not easily understood; unfathomable
lofty: impressively high in status
Prophets: Manifestations or chosen Messengers
pursuance: the carrying out
rank: degree or position of dignity, eminence, or excellence
Revelation: Communication of God and His Will to man
station: rank or position
transcendeth: extends far above and beyond

3. ...the Blessed Báb, Prophet and Herald of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle, Inaugurator of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle.

(Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957*, p. 80)

Adamic Cycle: period of time beginning with the Revelation of Adam and ending with the Declaration of the Báb
Blessed: holy, adored, and revered
culmination: attainment of the highest point
Cycle: era; age
Dispensation: religious System that regulates human affairs under divine authority

Founder: One who brought into being and is the organizer
Herald: Official that conveys the news and proclaims
Inaugurator: One who brings about the beginning
Prophet: One who reveals divinely inspired revelations of God

4. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them): "His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb), is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty."

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 19)

Ancient Beauty: Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh [one of His titles]
Exalted: highly praised, raised to an elevated state, and glorified
Forerunner: One that precedes and indicates the approach
foundation: basis or essential principle
Manifestation: great Prophet Who reveals the Words, and exhibits the signs and qualities

Oneness: of the quality, state, or fact of being inseparable
people of Bahá: Bahá'ís
Unity: being as one and the same; *"The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same."* (Bahá'u'lláh, *GWB*, p. 167)

5. *And when Thou didst purpose to make Thyself known unto men, Thou didst successively reveal the Manifestations of Thy Cause, and ordained each to be a sign of Thy Revelation among Thy people, and the Day-Spring of Thine invisible Self amidst Thy creatures, until the time when, as decreed by Thee, all Thy previous Revelations culminated in Him Whom Thou hast appointed as the Lord of all who are in the heaven of revelation and the kingdom of creation, Him Whom Thou hast established as the Sovereign Lord of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. He it was Whom Thou hast determined to be the Herald of Thy Most Great Revelation and the Announcer of Thy Most Ancient Splendor.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 128-29)

Announcer: One who makes information publicly known
Cause: eternal religious Faith
culminated: attained the highest point
Day-Spring: Manifestation
decreed: officially ordered as foreordained
earth: physical sphere and dwelling place of mortals
heaven(s): “By ‘heaven’ is meant the heaven of divine Revelation...” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI*, p. 44); the spiritual sphere and dwelling place of God, his angels, and the blessed souls who have passed on
Herald: Official that conveys the news and ↗

proclaims
kingdom: realm or dominion belonging to God
purpose: intend or determine
Lord: One with independent and supreme power
Manifestations: great Prophets Who reveal the Words, and exhibit the signs and qualities
Most Ancient Splendor: Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh [one of His titles]
ordained: predestined by appointment
reveal: make known by divine means
Revelation(s): Communication(s) of God and His Will to man
Sovereign: supreme and independent
successively: following one after the other

6. Shoghi Effendi feels that the Unity of the Bahá'í revelation as one complete whole embracing the Faith of the Báb should be emphasized... The Faith of the Báb should not be divorced from that of Bahá'u'lláh. ...due to the fact that the Báb considered Himself as the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh we should regard His dispensation together with that of Bahá'u'lláh as forming one entity, the former being an introductory to the advent of the latter.

(Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community*, pp. 426-27)

advent: coming into being or arrival
dispensation: religious System that regulates human affairs under divine authority
divorced: a relationship separated or disunited
emphasized: given special attention and importance
embracing: readily and gladly including
entity: single existence in reality
forerunner: one that precedes and indicates the approach
former: Báb's Dispensation
introductory: setting up or lead in

latter: Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh
regard: look upon or consider
revelation: Communication of God and His Will to man
Shoghi Effendi: The one appointed by `Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament to carry on into the future the function of authoritative interpretation of the Sacred Writings and the care and protection of the Bahá'í Faith.
Unity: combination of ordered parts constituting the whole

SHARING: *A breath from the spirit of inspiration...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to complete the statements below. When everyone has finished, have each person share, in a round, the one thing that was most outstanding or inspiring and how it made him or her feel. Please remind everyone not to remark on the comments of others.

The one thing from the quotations that was the most outstanding or inspiring to me was _____

It made me feel _____

Explain _____

SOME QUESTIONS: *A gentle breeze from the testing winds...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to answer the following questions. They can usually find answers in the quotations just studied or in the introduction. When everyone has finished, review the questions, then share and discuss the answers.

1. Bahá'u'lláh was an independent Manifestation of God. Was the Báb?
 yes
 no
2. Bahá'u'lláh wrote: *“Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted.”*¹ *“They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light.”*² Because of the “intensity” and “comparative potency” of the Báb’s Revelation, His station is said to _____ that of all former Manifestations.
 a. excel
 b. equal
 c. be inferior to
3. Why was the Revelation of the Báb not entirely foretold by the former Prophets of God?

4. Since the Báb was a Manifestation of God Who started a separate religious Dispensation, what were His followers called?
 a. Bahá'ís
 b. Bábís
 c. Báb's

¹ *GWB*, p. 78

² *GWB*, p. 48

5. The Báb was the _____ of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation.
- a. Forerunner
 - b. Harbinger (A person or thing that comes before to announce or give indication of what follows; herald; forerunner; precursor)
 - c. Announcer
 - d. Herald
6. Considering the Báb to be like the dawn and Bahá'u'lláh like the rising of the sun, both are to be considered as _____ the new "Universal Cycle."
- a. inaugurating
 - b. originating
 - c. initiating
 - d. riding
7. The Báb's Revelation is considered to be the _____ of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle.
- a. culmination
 - b. seal
 - c. Inaugurator
8. The Faith of the Báb together with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should be considered as forming one Revelation.
- true
 - false
9. Even though it was not covered in this lesson, try to name some other Manifestations of God.

A story about the Báb...

Secluded on the heights of a remote and dangerously situated mountain on the frontiers of the Ottoman and Russian empires; imprisoned within the solid walls of a four-towered fortress [the prison of Máh-Kú]; cut off from His family, His kindred and His disciples; living in the vicinity of a bigoted and turbulent community who, by race, tradition, language and creed, differed from the vast majority of the inhabitants of Persia; guarded by the people of a district which, as the birthplace of the Grand Vizir [Prime Minister of the Shah], had been made the recipient of the special favors of his administration, the Prisoner of Máh-Kú [the Báb] seemed in the eyes of His adversary [the Prime Minister] to be doomed to languish away the flower of His youth, and witness, at no distant date, the complete annihilation of His hopes. That adversary [the Prime Minister] was soon to realize, however, how gravely he had misjudged both his Prisoner and those on whom he had lavished his favors. An unruly, a proud and unreasoning people were gradually subdued by the gentleness of the Báb, were chastened by His modesty, were edified by His counsels, and instructed by His wisdom. They were so carried away by their love for Him that their first act every morning, notwithstanding the remonstrations of the domineering `Alí Khán [the warden of the prison], and the repeated threats of disciplinary measures received from Tihrán [the capital city of Persia], was to seek a place where they could catch a glimpse

of His face, and beseech from afar His benediction upon their daily work. In cases of dispute it was their wont to hasten to the foot of the fortress, and, with their eyes fixed upon His abode, invoke His name, and adjure one another to speak the truth. `Alí Khán [the warden] himself, under the influence of a strange vision, felt such mortification that he was impelled to relax the severity of his discipline, as an atonement for his past behavior. Such became his leniency that an increasing stream of eager and devout pilgrims began to be admitted at the gates of the fortress. Among them was the dauntless and indefatigable Mullá Husayn [first to believe in the Báb], who had walked on foot the entire way from Mashhad in the east of Persia to Máh-Kú, the westernmost outpost of the realm, and was able, after so arduous a journey, to celebrate the festival of Naw-Rúz (1848) in the company of his Beloved.

Secret agents, however, charged to watch `Alí Khán [the warden], informed Hájí Mírzá Áqásí [the Prime Minister] of the turn events were taking, whereupon he immediately decided to transfer the Báb to the fortress [prison] of Chihríq (about April 10, 1848), surnamed by Him the Jabal-i-Shadíd (the Grievous Mountain). There He was consigned to the keeping of Yahya Khán, a brother-in-law of Muhammad Sháh. Though at the outset he acted with the utmost severity, he was eventually compelled to yield to the fascination of his Prisoner. Nor were the kurds, who lived in the village of Chihríq, and whose hatred of the Shí`ahs [one of the two major branches of Islám] exceeded even that of the inhabitants of Máh-Kú, able to resist the pervasive power of the Prisoner's influence. They too were to be seen every morning, ere they started for their daily work, to approach the fortress and prostrate themselves in adoration before its holy Inmate. "So great was the confluence of the people," is the testimony of a European eye-witness, writing in his memoirs of the Báb, "that the courtyard, not being large enough to contain His hearers, the majority remained in the street and listened with rapt attention to the verses of the new Qur'án."

Indeed the turmoil raised in Chihríq eclipsed the scenes which Máh-Kú had witnessed. Siyyids [descendants of the Prophet Muhammad] of distinguished merit, eminent `ulamás [learned scholars of Islám], and even government officials were boldly and rapidly espousing the Cause of the Prisoner. The conversion of the zealous, the famous Mírzá Asadu'lláh, surnamed Dayyán, a prominent official of high literary repute, who was endowed by the Báb with the "hidden and preserved knowledge," and extolled as the "repository of the trust of the one true God," and the arrival of a dervish, a former navváb [governor], from India, whom the Báb in a vision had bidden renounce wealth and position, and hasten on foot to meet Him in Ádhirbáyján, brought the situation to a head. Accounts of these startling events reached Tabríz, were thence communicated to Tihrán, and forced Hájí Mírzá Áqásí [the Prime Minister] again to intervene. Dayyán's father, an intimate friend of that minister, had already expressed to him his grave apprehension at the manner in which the able functionaries of the state were being won over to the new Faith. To allay the rising excitement the Báb was summoned to Tabríz. Fearful of the enthusiasm of the people of Ádhirbáyján, those into whose custody He had been delivered decided to deflect their route, and avoid the town of Khuy, passing instead through Urúmiyyih. On His arrival in that town Prince Malik Qásim Mírzá ceremoniously received Him, and was even seen, on a certain Friday, when his Guest was riding on His way to the public bath, to accompany Him on foot, while the Prince's footmen endeavored to restrain the people who, in their overflowing enthusiasm, were pressing to catch a glimpse of so marvelous a Prisoner. Tabríz, in its turn in the throes of wild excitement, joyously hailed His arrival. Such was the fervor of popular feeling that the Báb was assigned a place outside the gates of the city. This, however, failed to allay the prevailing emotion. Precautions, warnings and restrictions served only to aggravate a situation that had already become critical. It was at this juncture that the Grand Vizir [Prime Minister] issued his historic order for the immediate convocation of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tabríz to consider the most effectual measures which would, once and for all, extinguish the flames of so devouring a conflagration.

The circumstances attending the examination of the Báb, as a result of so precipitate an act, may well rank as one of the chief landmarks of His dramatic career. The avowed purpose of that convocation was to arraign the Prisoner, and deliberate on the steps to be taken for the extirpation of

His so-called heresy. It instead afforded Him the supreme opportunity of His mission to assert in public, formally and without any reservation, the claims inherent in His Revelation. In the official residence, and in the presence, of the governor of Ádhirbáyján, Násiri'd-Dín Mírzá, the heir to the throne; under the presidency of Hájí Mullá Mahmúd, the Nizámu'l-'Ulamá, the Prince's tutor; before the assembled ecclesiastical dignitaries of Tabríz, the leaders of the Shaykhi community [followers of Shaykh Ahmad], the Shaykhu'l-Islám [head of the religious court of the city], and the Imám-Jum'ih [chief religious leader of the city], the Báb, having seated Himself in the chief place which had been reserved for the Valí-'Ahd (the heir to the throne), gave, in ringing tones, His celebrated answer to the question put to Him by the President of that assembly. "I am," He exclaimed, "I am, I am the Promised One! I am the One Whose name you have for a thousand years invoked, at Whose mention you have risen, Whose advent you have longed to witness, and the hour of Whose Revelation you have prayed God to hasten. Verily, I say, it is incumbent upon the peoples of both the East and the West to obey My word, and to pledge allegiance to My person."

Awe-struck, those present momentarily dropped their heads in silent confusion. Then Mullá Muhammad-i-Mamáqání [noted and learned disciple of Shaykh Ahmad], that one-eyed white-bearded renegade, summoning sufficient courage, with characteristic insolence, reprimanded Him as a perverse and contemptible follower of Satan; to which the undaunted Youth retorted that He maintained what He had already asserted. To the query subsequently addressed to Him by the Nizámu'l-'Ulamá [Prince's tutor] the Báb affirmed that His words constituted the most incontrovertible evidence of His mission, adduced verses from the Qur'án to establish the truth of His assertion, and claimed to be able to reveal, within the space of two days and two nights, verses equal to the whole of that Book. In answer to a criticism calling His attention to an infraction by Him of the rules of grammar, He cited certain passages from the Qur'án as corroborative evidence, and, turning aside, with firmness and dignity, a frivolous and irrelevant remark thrown at Him by one of those who were present, summarily disbanded that gathering by Himself rising and quitting the room. The convocation thereupon dispersed, its members confused, divided among themselves, bitterly resentful and humiliated through their failure to achieve their purpose. Far from daunting the spirit of their Captive, far from inducing Him to recant or abandon His mission, that gathering was productive of no other result than the decision, arrived at after considerable argument and discussion, to inflict the bastinado on Him [a beating with a wooden rod on the soles of the feet], at the hands, and in the prayer-house of the heartless and avaricious Mírzá `Alí-Asghar, the Shaykhu'l-Islám [head of the religious court of the city]. Confounded in his schemes Hájí Mírzá Áqásí [the Prime Minister] was forced to order the Báb to be taken back to Chihríq.

(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 19-22)

ANSWERS: *Affirming treasures...*

1. yes
2. a
3. "...the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed."
4. b
5. a, b, c, and d
6. a, b, and c, they all imply the same thing
7. a
8. true
9. Some other Manifestations of God include: Adam, Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh and Zoroaster.

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